

What it claimed is:

1. A method for verifiably transmitting an electronic package from a sender to a recipient through a certifying authority via a public communications network, the method comprising the steps of:

5 receiving an electronic package that is transmitted from the sender to the certifying authority via the public communications network;

storing particulars relating to the electronic package on a server operated by the certifying authority for use in later verifying the particulars relating to the electronic package;

10 delivering the electronic package from the certifying authority to the recipient via the public communications network;

generating an encrypted hash value based on the particulars relating to the electronic package and the delivery thereof, the encrypted hash value uniquely identifying the particulars relating to the electronic package and the delivery thereof; and

15 transmitting an electronic certificate of service from the certifying authority via the public communications network, the electronic certificate of service including the particulars relating to the electronic package and the encrypted hash value as verification of the content and delivery of the electronic package

20 from the certifying authority to the recipient.

2. The method of Claim 1 further comprising the step of storing the electronic package on the server operated by the certifying authority for use in later producing a duplicate of the electronic package.

3. The method of Claim 1 wherein the electronic package comprises an email message.

4. The method of Claim 3 wherein the electronic package further comprises an email attachment.

5. The method of Claim 1 wherein the electronic package comprises a ascii file.

6. The method of Claim 1 wherein the electronic package comprises a binary file.

7. The method of Claim 1 wherein the particulars surrounding the electronic package comprises date and time of transmission.

8. The method of Claim 1 wherein the particulars surrounding the electronic package comprises identity of sender and identity of recipient.

9. The method of Claim 1 wherein the particulars surrounding the electronic package comprises an email address of sender and email address of recipient.

10. The method of Claim 1 wherein the particulars surrounding the electronic package comprises maximum number of days within which to deliver the electronic package to the recipient.

11. The method of Claim 10 further comprising the step of informing the sender, in event that delivery was not made to the recipient within the maximum number of days.

12. The method of Claim 1 wherein the particulars surrounding the electronic package comprises a date through which the electronic package is to be stored by the certifying authority.

13. The method of Claim 1 wherein tracked message includes an email message and an email attachment and wherein the particulars surrounding the electronic package comprises identity of sender, email address of sender, identity of recipient, email address of recipient, date of transmission, time of transmission, length of the email message, name of the email attachment, and size of the email attachment.

14. The method of Claim 1 further comprising the steps of creating the electronic certificate of service as an encrypted file.

15. The method of Claim 1 wherein the step of creating the electronic certificate of service as an encrypted file is accomplished by creating an encrypted PDF file that is printable but not modifiable.

16. The method of Claim 1 further comprising the step of verifying an encrypted hash value that is questioned by  
transmitting the encrypted hash value to the certifying authority; and  
comparing the encrypted hash value that is questioned with records of the certifying  
5 authority.

17. The method of Claim 1 further comprising the step of notifying the recipient via the public communications network that the electronic package is available for pickup from the server operated by the certifying authority

18. The method of Claim 16 wherein the step of delivering the electronic package  
10 from the certifying authority to the recipient via the public communications network occurs upon a request for download thereof by the recipient; and wherein the step of transmitting an electronic certificate of service from the certifying authority via the public communications network takes place after completion of the delivering step.

19. The method of Claim 1 wherein the step of delivering the electronic package  
15 from the certifying authority to the recipient is legally presumed by virtue of sending the electronic package to a valid email address associated with the recipient.

20. The method of Claim 1 wherein the step of transmitting an electronic certificate of service transmits an electronic certificate of service to the sender.

21. The method of Claim 1 wherein the step of transmitting an electronic certificate of service transmits an electronic certificate of service to the recipient.

22. The method of Claim 1 wherein the step of transmitting an electronic certificate of service transmits an electronic certificate of service to a designee of the sender other than the recipient.